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ABSTRACT

A brief description of the Ohio Vocational Interest Survey (OVIS) is presented. This instrument was designed to facilitate vocational exploration rather than prediction. In this criterion-referenced instrument, the OVIS items are brief descriptions of activities, designed to represent a certain occupational cluster and/or criterion. A scale score is interpreted as an individual's current index of interest in a particular area of work. The OVIS attempts to provide a rational method of vocational self-description. The resulting OVIS profile is interpreted mainly on an idiographic basis. High and low interests can be rank ordered, initial individual counseling approaches in terms of the relationship between measured and expressed interests can be indicated, and percentiles and stanines can be shown. It is felt that the OVIS has a definite counseling use. Its two main objectives are to facilitate career explcitation and vocational and educational decision-making. It is noted that the OVIS should be used in conjunction with other instruments. (JS)

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OVIS - a non-predictive device

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In his AMEG luncheon presentation: "Tests and Counseling: The Marriage that Failed", Leo Goldman (1971) lashed out at the abuse of tests as prediction devices for individuals and hoped that tests would instead help the individual to "change the most" and "realize his self". The Ohio Vocational Interest Survey (OVIS) (D'Costa et. al., 1969) was designed with precisely this in mind.

An exploratory rather than a predictive device

It is asserted in the Manual for Interpreting (1970, p.32) that OVIS is a device designed to facilitate vocational exploration rather than prediction. In other words, OVIS is not intended to provide an advance notice of the job that the individual is likely to enter in the future, but rather to provide a systemmatic method to understand oneself, in occupational terms. This process of translating onself into work terms is an enlightening experience to the developing individual. (Super et. al., 1963) Super's concepts of "reality testing" and "forming an occupational self-concept" are descriptive of this process. The principle invoked here is that experience and learning become worthwhile to the extent that they help the individual prepare for his role in society.

A criterion-referenced instrument

The OVIS disclaimer regarding prediction is atypical of interest measurement. Test pundits tend to look askance at an instrument that provides no occupational scores and no fakeability scale. "What is the validity of the instrument?", they ask. The truth is that OVIS has the kind of validity that it claims, namely, construct. The items in each OVIS scale are a priori, "brief descriptions of activities" type, designed to represent a certain occupational cluster/or criterion. In this sense, OVIS is a criterion-referenced instrument. The 24 OVIS scales represent a defined domain, namely, the entire world of work as described by the 114 worker-traits-groups of the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT), (U.S.E.S. 1965). Each scale represents a criterion.

A scale score is interpreted as the individual's current index of interest in the particular criterion or area of work. This index is reasonably stable[1] for the purposes of exploration or vocational

[1]As reported in the OVIS Manual for Interpreting (P.33) test-retest reliabilities over a two-week period are in the high .70's and .80's. Even after two years these reliabilities range in the .50's and .60's.

planning because the OVIS scales represent fairly broad areas and there is a reasonable diversity of item content in each scale.

Multivariate analyses showed (D'Costa, 1968) that OVIS scales can discriminate among certain vocational education groups in meaningful ways.[2] Again, this type of validity is not of a predicting kind but differentiating, which is essential to interest measurement (Strong, 1943).

Self-description emphasized

The characteristics described above can at best promise a rational method of vocational self-description. The OVIS profile is primarily interpreted on an idiographic basis. The rank-ordered printout of scale scores is used to highlight the individual's high and low interests. The use of two modes of interest assessment, namely, the Interest Checklist and the Student Information Questionnaire Section, suggests initial individual counseling approaches in terms of the relationship of measured interests, on the one hand, and expressed interests, expressed vocational plans, on the other.

The OVIS profile also presents percentiles and stanines so that the individual may, if he wishes, look at how he stands in terms of national or local groups like him.

OVIS has a definite counseling use and its two main objectives are to facilitate career exploration and vocational and educational decision-making. In fact it is fair to state that vocational interest measurement by itself can be quite meaningless unless it is accompanied by a systemmatic exploration of the world of work. Thus OVIS becomes a self-analysis technique whose main merits lie in its logical scheme for representing the vast and complex world of work. The OVIS profile appears simplistic, yet a trained counselor can use it as a basis for introducing individuals to the wealth of information provided in the Dictionary of Occupational Titles and other occupational information systems. The intensity of this career exploration can be varied to fit the vocational maturity of the individual.

Is OVIS and counseling a marriage that failed? I believe we can say quite truthfully that the answer is no. OVIS was conceptualized and designed to facilitate the counseling process, not to replace it or to stand apart from it. The instrument cannot stand alone. It should be used only as part of a systemmatic career exploration program. In fact the use of OVIS as an isolated event is a seriously questionnable practice.

Whereas ability tests and achievement batteries are administered to students, OVIS is administered for students. As an objective system of self-analysis, OVIS appears to fit what Goldman has called a "different" kind of test. Not only is OVIS sensitive to change, it is an agent which can help to facilitate change. OVIS as a conceptual framework or

[2]This particular study was based on an earlier version of OVIS.

construct provides students with a way to learn more about their interests and the world of work; thus, satisfying another of Goldman's criteria that a test must be oriented toward learning. The OVIS authors share Goldman's concerns about counseling and we hope we have provided counselors with a tool they can use in order that students might learn and change.

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